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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5791
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES IMMEDIATE
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 001057

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PASS TO USDA/FAS (ELIZABETH JONES), USTR (D.VETTER)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/17/2017

TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [EU](#) [PO](#)
SUBJECT: PORTUGAL ON THE APRIL 19 EC STANDING COMMITTEE

REF: A. A) SECSTATE 50150

[1](#)B. B) LISBON 438

Classified By: Inga Heemink, Pol/Econ Officer, Embassy Lisbon,
Reasons 1.4(b) and 1.4(d).

[1](#)1. (C) On April 18, Ambassador Hoffman sent a letter incorporating reftel A talking points to Luis Caiano, Assistant to the Ministry of Agriculture's Deputy State Secretary of Agriculture and Fishes, urging Portugal to vote

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favorably at the April 19 Standing Committee of the Food Chain and Public Health. Pol/Econ officer followed up with Rui Noronho of the Ministry of Agriculture Office of Planning and Policies (GPPAA), who stated that there were some questions regarding the analysis of the stacks under consideration, but that Portugal would "not vote against" the varieties if the Portuguese concerns could be addressed.

[1](#)2. (C/NF) However, a reliable Embassy contact and biotech expert in Portugal reported in confidence that Portugal was inclined to vote favorably on the sugarbeet variety but not on the two corn varieties. He added that Lurdes Camilo and Paula Bico, also from the GPPAA, believe that neither Monsanto nor Pioneer have ever presented suitable control methods for the maize stacks and would recommend to the Commission not to conduct a vote on these stacks.

[1](#)3. (C) Comment: While Portugal is one of the few European countries to plant biotech corn and both the farmers and animal feed industry have repeatedly expressed their desire for greater access to biotech crops, the GOP's position on these issues is unclear. In the past, the Portuguese representatives voting in the EU have decided to vote against the advice and recommendations of their technical staff (reftel B). Our contact also reports that many at the Ministry of Agriculture are unhappy due to reorganization and layoffs, which has created difficulty in extracting clarity on some important policy positions. We have found our contact to be the most accurate indicator of Portugal's biotech voting.
Hoffman